

Soils and Crops

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

SEEDING NEW MEADOWS.

One of the interesting and successful features of the Illustration Station work is the comparison between heavy and light seeding of timothy and clover. When making surveys of many farms in each county where Illustration Stations are located it was found that most farmers were not sowing sufficient seed to give the best results. To illustrate the advantage of heavier seeding, particularly with clover, on each station a small portion of the field is sown to the usual amount used in the neighborhood, which is from two to four pounds of clover and eight to ten pounds of timothy, and the larger portion of the field sown with a mixture of clover and timothy amounting to twenty pounds per acre. Every illustration showed the heavier seeding to give the heaviest crops of hay. The difference in growth is so noticeable that farmers passing can see the line between the two lots to a foot. On several stations the clovers on the light seeded portions were winter killed, while the heavy growth formed a protection to the roots and usually withstood the severest winter and spring frosts. Several operators report one-quarter to one-third more hay on the heavier seeding and have a much better chance for a second crop of hay or seed the same season.

When seeding sandy or clay loams sow eight pounds of clover and Red clover; two pounds of alfalfa and ten pounds of timothy per acre. In some cases it is advisable to sow two pounds of alfalfa in addition.

On heavy clay that is liable to be damp or on light, acid sandy soil sow eight pounds of alfalfa; two of Red clover and ten of timothy per acre.

On black muck or peaty soil sow eight pounds of alfalfa; two pounds of Red clover; eight pounds of timothy and two pounds of Red Top per acre. For a nurse crop on peaty soil, always sow barley.

SHEEP ON THE GENERAL FARM.

Sheep have one thing in common with poultry: a farmer is more likely to be successful with few than with many. In the beginning it is a very good plan to get only a few breeding ewes, and grow into the business as experience shows the way. One of the cheapest ways of starting a flock is to secure young western ewes and breed them to a purebred sire of the mutton breeds.

A purebred ram is relatively cheap, and without one a flock soon degenerates.

The early lambs are the most profitable, but the production of such lambs requires considerable experience and better equipment. It would probably be better for the beginning farmer to breed his ewes for late lambing.

Sheep are the natural prey of parasites, which flourish chiefly during the hot, dry months of summer. For this reason sheep should not be allowed to drink water from old stagnant pools, but should at all times be supplied with pure, fresh water.

Another summer precaution is to insure plenty of green feed. Pastures are likely to get scant in July and August, but the forehand farmer will have a field of rape ready for them about that time. In the fall, rape which had been seeded in the corn field

at the time of last cultivation, will also supply pasturage at a time when the grasses are short.

The winter care of the flock is the most critical, however. Proper shelter is highly essential, but expensive buildings are not needed. Sheep want to be dry under foot, and they do not stand drafts. They are amply protected against cold weather, provided the rain, snow, and wind is kept out of their sheds.

Proper winter feeding of sheep is quite an art, as too heavy, as well as too light feeding is harmful. It is essential that the flock go into winter quarters in a good, thrifty condition. Clover or alfalfa hay of good quality, together with an occasional addition of corn fodder, is all the ewes will need until about a month before lambing, if the lambs are to be dropped before the ewes get into pasture.

No grain ration has given more satisfactory results in many experiments, than a mixture of whole oats and bran. Both are easily available on the average farm. Either half and half or two parts of oats to one of bran is satisfactory, and each ewe should receive about half a pound of this mixture a day. When other roughages are substituted for the alfalfa or clover, it is best to feed grain all winter long. Do not winter a flock by giving them the run of the straw stack.

To keep the digestive tract in good condition root crops or corn silage should be fed, in amounts not to exceed two to two and one-half pounds per day. This succulent feed, combined with plenty of exercise, is the best tonic in the world. In dry weather it is advisable to feed the roughage some distance from the barns or sheds, so that the ewes will be forced to walk around considerable.

The closest attention must be paid to the flock at lambing time. Many lambs and an occasional ewe can be saved if the shepherd remains on the job. Then, when the lambs are about a week or two old, some bright day the ram lambs should be castrated. A week or two later all the lambs should be docked.

Lambs should be weaned when they are about three or four months of age. Unless this is done they will nurse until late in the fall, and cause the ewes to go into winter quarters in poor flesh.

Sheep should be sheared as soon as the weather gets warm enough so that there will be no further danger of catching cold. About a week after shearing, the whole flock should be dipped, as the presence of lice and ticks keep the flock thin.

The following are excellent rules for the guidance of beginners in sheep husbandry:

1. Use good purebred rams.
2. Select young ewes. Yearlings, two-year-olds, or perhaps three-year-olds, are far more desirable for starting a flock than older ones.
3. Discard broken-mouthed ewes and ewes with bad udders.
4. Choose ewes having good size, desirable forms, and dense fleeces.
5. Feed the lambs especially well throughout the first year because a sheep makes his greatest growth during this period.
6. Give the flock good care throughout the entire year.

Why Farm Gardens Fail

BY F. F. ROCKWELL.

I used to wonder why so many good farmers who have well-kept farms never have gardens that amount to a row of pinks. Some of these fellows I have in mind always plant good-sized vegetable gardens, but they don't get enough out of them to keep a pet rabbit from starving. Others don't know anything about gardening, and are too timid to give it a trial, or perhaps they aren't interested. Another sort of chap is the one who has tried having a farm vegetable garden, made a fiver of it, and then quit in disgust and has never tried again. This latter class is much larger than the one who has been seeded in the corn field

The health experts say that much of the ill health found on farms—despite the fact that the farmer gets plenty of exercise and spends most of his time in the open air—is really due to lack of green vegetables in the average farm diet. Here again it seems to me that ordinary horse sense should have told us this long before the food experts found it out for us.

REASONS FOR FAILURE.

Sometimes the reason for garden failures is too little knowledge; but far more often it is the result of attempting too elaborate a garden, and as a result giving it up on the grounds that it was more bother than it was worth.

But no reason or excuse justifies any intelligent farmer from going ahead and having a successful garden. Any intelligent farmer can succeed the first season if he will give half the thought and study to it that he gives to his crops or animals.

It would be foolish to plant a garden on one farm that would perhaps be just the thing for the farm next door; and so, if you are going to have a garden, the very first step is to determine what type of garden will best fit the actual conditions which you have to face.

In trying to determine this, the first factor to consider is how much handwork can be put into your garden.

Another thing to be given careful consideration is whether or not there is any local market for surplus vegetables. The farm garden may pay a very handsome cash profit in addition to supplying the home table. In recent years the roadside automobile stands have made it possible to market many vegetables the farm family can use.

So it only takes ordinary common sense to figure out that all the articles of food you can grow, which will pay you just as well as any other way, just as well and just as really as though you got retail prices for them. But the cash return is not the only advantage there is in growing all the vegetables the farm family can use.

A Barnyard Idyll

April sun is a-shining, south winds a-blowing soft,
Pigeons a-billing and cooing, up in the old barn loft,
Lambs playing tag round the feed racks, life is a merry joke,
Meadow lark's song from the meadow, down by the old lone oak.

Hens all a-cackling and singing, pigs by the straw-stack's sides,
Taking a morning sun-bath, warm on their fat black hides;
Indoors, the stanchions cackle, drowsy and fast asleep,
Dreaming of soft green grasses, and brooklets cool and deep.

Cat on the window sill drowsing, keeping a wary eye
On the swallows a-sweeping by her, screaming their battle cry,
Calf looking out of the doorway, with foolish baby eyes,
Wondering just what life is, doomed to a sad surprise.

Colts a-running and kicking, outside the barnyard wall,
Free from halter and blanket and prisoning gloomy stall;
Spon flock and herd will be drifting to pastures green and lush,
For winter's snows are vanished, and spring is in the flush.

—Raymond C. Rodger.



Nova Scotia's Prettiest Girl.

The Bluenose province recently set about to select from its young womanhood its prettiest specimen. The choice fell upon Miss Lillian Corbin, of Weymouth, in the Land of Evangeline. The Halifax Herald is arranging to have her portrait painted and forwarded to the Prince of Wales.

kind of surplus vegetables profitably, because the time does not have to be taken to make a long trip to town, and of course much higher prices will be obtained than could be had from the local retail merchants.

To repeat, the garden should be laid out in such a way that most of the cultivating can be done with a horse. For this purpose the "hoe harrow," or harrow-tooth cultivator, is very convenient. With it you can do finer work, closer to the plants, than with the ordinary horse cultivator. This implement is good not only for garden use, but equally as valuable for early cultivation of potatoes and other field crops.

PLANT FEW VARIETIES.

Another great danger to avoid in the planning of the practical farm garden is that of planting too many varieties. It is always a great temptation, when you are making out your seed order, to try this, that, and the other thing which is lauded to the skies. Don't do it. You may be tempted to get a lot of early, medium early, mid-season, main crop, and late varieties of each of a number of vegetables. But they all result in multiplying your work unnecessarily; and, especially if you happen to have hot dry weather, you will find them all maturing at once.

For the practical farm garden I would say not over two varieties of bush beans, a green and perhaps a yellow; one of beets; an early and a late cabbage; one kind of chard; an early and a late sweet corn; one variety of cucumber; kohlrabi, which is very easy to grow and develops early in the spring; one loose-head and one butter-head lettuce; two or three kinds of muskmelon, if you have plenty of room; one kind of early white onion for summer use, and one yellow for fall and winter; a little parsley; plenty of peas; and an early spring sowing, and again in June for winter; plenty of peas, not over two or three varieties, dwarf or bush, according to how easily brush may be obtained to support the latter; pepper plants; a few radishes (usually altogether too many are planted); plenty of rutabaga for fall and winter use; plenty of spinach, which may be easily canned for winter; both summer and winter squash; tomatoes, early, and a main crop variety; turnips, extra early for spring, and a good winter variety for planting in July or early August; and maybe one or two kinds of water-melons.

In getting most of these things, order enough seed for two or three plantings. This, of course, does not apply to things like squash, muskmelon, onions, pumpkins, and water-melon; but of most of the others, two or more plantings should be made in order to give a continuous supply throughout the summer, and a large extra late planting of all the things which can be easily kept for winter.

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such as beets, carrots, cabbage, parsnips, rutabagas, and turnips.
If you will follow this plan it will save you money in buying seed and much work in planting. Don't be tempted to try too many novelties. Stick rather to the standard varieties which have made good. If you do not know which the standard varieties are, you can easily get a pretty good idea by comparing the descriptions in three or four different catalogues. Those which you find recommended in all you can usually depend on.

PLAN YOUR GARDEN.

And one last, but by no means least, thing to do in getting ready for a worthwhile but thoroughly practical farm garden is to plan your garden in advance.

This is the hardest thing of all to get the average man to do. He will say a lot of seed without having calculated, in even the roughest kind of way, how much of each thing he needs or should grow, and when planting time comes stick them in. Two or three hours spent some evening, with a pencil and a piece of paper, making a rough plan of the garden, space it is to occupy, what is to be planted in it, how many rows of each thing will be wanted, etc., will save ten times that number of hours in useless planting, weeding, and cultivating all summer long.

Making a plan of the garden is really the first thing to do. I have purposely saved this until the last because I want you to be sure to remember it.

Plan to Plant Trees.

One of the finest contributions to the community in which we live is the proper ornamentation of our premises with trees. A tree invariably impresses itself as the supreme tribute. The humblest cottage surrounded by stately trees gives out to the passing world the beneficent influence of a pure home life. Every member of the family should be interested and plan to take part in tree-planting this year.

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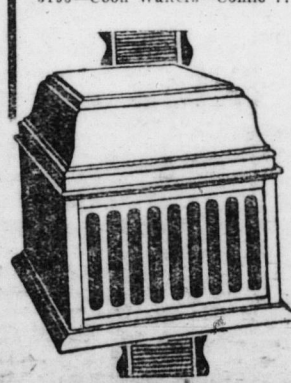
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The question of how close or how far apart lateral drains should be placed is largely a matter of the character and lay of the land. If the land is somewhat rolling, with fairly good drainage to the lower levels, with the subsoil somewhat porous, the lateral drain can follow the low ground with very good results. But if the surface is rather flat and of a texture which we commonly call "juggy," then it will be necessary to run laterals on to the higher ground and from three to four rods apart.

Not only is it of vast importance to have ground well drained in order to get on to it in early spring with the plow, and get the seeds in early; but there is a more important and far-reaching effect to be obtained by tile drainage. And that is the condition it puts the soil in for the reception of seed and the growth of plants. It is an old established fact that water and air will not occupy the same place at the same time. Many farmers have the idea that because they can not see water standing on the surface of their land that it is not wet enough to hurt it, but at the same time the water level may be two inches below the surface, thereby excluding all the air and becoming, as we say, "waterlogged," and remaining in that condition from the time the fall rains come until late in the spring. With the result that the ground becomes hard and clammy and the bacterial life, which is so necessary to plant growth, is almost obliterated as a consequence of being covered with water for so long a period. But on the other hand, if the water level can be lowered to a depth of about thirty inches the pores of the ground which were formerly filled with water become filled with air as the water recedes, thereby bringing more warmth to the ground and encouraging and developing bacterial life. And the soil when plowed, will break up loose and mellow, easy to prepare the seedbed, and will be in far better condition to receive seed and produce a more healthy plant growth than can possibly be obtained on undrained land.

Another fact stands out prominent as we lower the water level in our soil, and that is that our field plants will send their roots down deeper into the earth and thereby take up plant food that would not be available on undrained land because plant roots will not penetrate water-soaked ground to any extent, but will spread out near the surface of the soil, then when dry weather comes and the surface dries out they are in a poor condition to withstand the drought.

Tiled drainage will often pay for itself in one or two seasons.—E. G. Storm.

Potatoes for Pigs.

In all cases potatoes fed to pigs should be cooked. If fed raw they are very hard to digest and of comparatively small feeding value. The water in which they are boiled should be poured off says the Dominion Department of Agriculture's bulletin "Swine Husbandry in Canada" as it is better tasting especially if the potatoes are unsound. The feeding value of potatoes consists almost wholly in the large amount of starch that they contain and are consequently better suited for the fattening hog. Potatoes are an extremely one-sided food, and should be supplemented with some food-stuff rich in muscle formers. For this purpose nothing is better than pea meal; if pea meal is too costly barley may be substituted, and if some skim milk or buttermilk can be added to the ration, very satisfactory results will be obtained. In illustration and substantiation the writer points out that the Danes, our great rivals in the British bacon trade, found that 400 pounds of potatoes cooked and fed with skim milk equalled 100 pounds of mixed grain fed with a similar quantity of skim milk, and also that the pork produced from potatoes and skim milk was of excellent value.

Lamb for the Farmer.

Through careless handling in the killing, dressing and cutting operations of lambs much waste may result; in many cases also the meat may become "off flavor." This can be avoided by adopting proper methods in slaughtering the lamb, in dressing the carcass, and in cutting the meat preparatory to cooking. How these operations should be performed is well described in a bulletin, with an abundance of descriptive illustrations, prepared by the Live Stock Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture. The bulletin also tells how farmers and villagers can form lamb rings, thus enabling them to dine off their own delicacy. Eight members form a suitable lamb ring, to each of whom five or six pounds of choice fresh lamb can be supplied from a single carcass. A ring of this size can usually be operated without special delivery, the boys or girls calling for the meat after school hours. Those interested should write to the Publications Branch of the Department at Ottawa for a copy.

Man must do with his hands what the hen does with her feet if he wants good hatches from the incubator. Turn the eggs daily from the third to the eighteenth day. Three turns a day are not too many.